

PERSONAL STATEMENTS

5. The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):

That brings question time to an end. We now come to statements so, firstly, a personal statement by Deputy Baudains.

5.1 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:

It was with some surprise that I found I had been declared '*en default*' for the sitting on 14th March 2007. I thank the Deputy of St. Peter for explaining my absence in Norway, but as I make no apologies for that absence I believe, Sir, that Members are entitled to an explanation. As we all know, the work of a States Member covers many functions and, while I appreciate attendance at States Assemblies is supposed to override all other appointments, pragmatism also plays a part, as does equity. I can recall many occasions when Members have been granted *default excusé*, ranging from being on holiday through to meetings with visiting dignitaries to trips on official business, which at times can be open to question. Members will recall references I have made in the past to the abduction of 3 children from Jersey to Norway in 2005. The mother has been fighting the illegal abduction of her children without success in the last 3 court appearances. Having been involved from the early days when my assistance was first sought and bearing in mind my knowledge of both their and our court rulings and legal issues, it was decided to enter me as a witness for the custody case to be heard from 14th to 16th March 2007. To pull out would have irreparably damaged the mother's case. To ask for an adjournment, while I debated government reform, would have had a similar effect. In this case I believe attempting to achieve the return of 3 children outweighed any influence I could have had during the in committee debate. I therefore maintain the hours I spent revisiting my files in preparation for the court, together with travelling there at my own expense, was the correct decision to make.